

# The Second Coming of Christ

by Harvey Reiff

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*The second coming of Christ is a real event that will happen, and we should be prepared by looking for signs and having a thankful heart.*

**Duration:** 1:11:29

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:19-21, Matthew 24:27, Matthew 25:1-30, Acts 1:9-11

**Topics:** "Second Coming"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the seriousness of the return of Christ and the impending judgment that will follow. He references Peter's words in 1 Peter 4:7-9, where Peter urges believers to be sober-minded, watchful in prayer, and to have fervent love for one another. The preacher also highlights the parable of the sheep and the goats in Matthew 25, emphasizing the separation that will occur on the day of judgment. He uses personal examples of separation, such as saying goodbye to loved ones or attending a funeral, to illustrate the gravity of this future separation. The preacher concludes by urging believers to use the warnings of Christ's return to persuade others to turn to obedience and holiness.

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## Transcript

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A special thank you to all who support this ministry. Well, I greet you in the name of our Savior this morning. I want to say good morning to you all.

It's been a privilege to worship with you so far this morning. And I pray that we could continue this from here. The subject I want to look at this morning is the second coming of Christ.

Now, I'll not refer to a number of scriptures. I don't have a particular text in mind, but like I said, referring to a number of different passages of scripture. I'll try to give that reference as I go.

Sometimes I get the feeling that there's none of us sitting here. I don't believe this morning that would say that we do not believe in the second coming of Christ. But sometimes I get the feeling that we are sharing a size.

We live in a society today. We're sharing as we were driving in this morning. I get the feeling that we're sharing our life here with a bulk of people that have lost sight of the coming of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

When I think of the schools that have taken the Bibles out of them, that tells me that we live in a society for the bulk of them would not say that we don't believe in this. But for the very fact they've taken Bibles out of schools and replaced them with other books and literature and so on, that we must be living in that time or getting pointing closer to that time where Jesus said, as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be in the coming of the Son of Man. And he gives a list of things that were happening there.

They were marrying. They were given in marriage. They were eating.

They were drinking. They were maybe planting the fields and they were harvesting the crops. They were building barns and houses and banks.

And the list could go on. And we see that today. And there's nothing wrong with that in and of itself.

But I believe what was happening back there, people became so occupied or preoccupied, so absorbed in the things of this life that they lost sight of the flood that was prophesied about. They did not believe. A few were in there that still believe the words of God.

Let's just think a bit about Noah and the time when he was building that ark. And how much he had to go against the flow of his neighbors, his community, all those that he met. Just picture with me Noah going to the lumber place and buying material for that ark.

Imagine the ridicule that could have been there. What are you building, Noah? And he would have to explain all this material that he's gathering together and people there scratching their heads probably and saying, hmm, very strange, building the ark, it's going to rain. And all those years, brother Noah was faithful in the midst of a flow that was going a different direction.

You know, was it because Noah built that ark, that safe little haven for he and his family? Was it because of that that he could enter in when it began to rain? No, it was simply because Noah believed God. Let's think of Abraham, another hero of faith in his time. When God promised him he was going to have a son and he's going to become the father of a great nation.

And the Bible tells us he had hope against hope. He had hope against the impossible. He believed in a resurrection.

Romans tells us he did not consider the deadness of his wife Sarah's womb that was way beyond childbearing years and the deadness of his own body that was way beyond seed producing years at 100 years old. The Bible says he did not stagger at the promises of God. And a man at 100 years old today, we know he would stagger every other way.

Picture with me Abraham walking around as an old man, 100 years old and limping around, trying to take a drink and he's going like that and he's staggering. But the Bible tells us he was strong in his faith. He

believed the words of God.

He was a powerful man. And he had another little secret in there that kept him so faithful to God's promises. The Bible tells us in Romans that he glorified God.

And that goes back to our lesson, our children's lesson. I appreciate that. A thankful heart bringing glory to God.

And he was faithful. Brothers, today, I believe that is true. As our brother said, an ungrateful heart, a pessimist attitude against spiritual things, against God and so on is defeating the whole purpose of Christianity in our midst.

And as I worked the last several years working with people, I came to the conclusion that most people, the human tendency is to look at the negative, the critical things of life and walk around and complaining about problems, aches and pains and whatever else it is, and not cultivating that good, thankful attitude that Abraham had. There's a few people that somehow have managed and have learned to go through life and see the good things about other people, even if there's bad things. Paul says, whatever things are good, whatever things are pure, whatever things are honest, use mind discipline and think on those things.

That's my goal. And I confess this morning, I tend to be a very negative person many times. I can make mountains out of molehills.

And I confess that is sin. I want to move forward and cultivate a good, thankful heart to God. There's a key in there of success.

Well, this morning, if you're one of those, and I trust there's no one sitting here that has this doubt in their mind about the second coming of Christ. And maybe you've struggled with that thought, as in the days of Noah, when everything is going so normal. And it's been a long, long time now since Christ's ascension.

And things are sort of going on in a normal routine of life. The sun comes up in the east and it sets in the west. The weather forecasters say there's a rain or a snowstorm coming.

And it usually comes just year after year after year, the routine of life. It does something to us. It sort of wears on us.

And I believe that is why the Bible is filled from Old Testament throughout the New Testament of Scripture verses after verses after verses that prophesy and talk about the second coming of Christ. The Old Testament, and I didn't do all this research myself, but those who study such things came up with these numbers. The Old Testament itself speaks about the second coming of Christ one thousand eight hundred and forty five times.

Can you imagine? And the Apostles writings themselves, it says one verse out of seven is connected in some way with his return. One verse out of seven on an average in the Apostles writings is connected with the second coming of Christ. And this one really blew my mind.

It says for every one prophecy on the first coming of Christ, there are eight on Christ's second coming. Can you imagine? Every time you read in the Old Testament of bits and pieces and hints of the first coming of our Savior, our Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Throughout the Bible for every one of those prophecies, there are eight to average out prophecies of the second coming of Christ.

The first coming happens. That first prophecy happened. Now we have eight times chances.

Yeah, in and above that, that almost blew my mind. But, you know, when you look at the teachings of Jesus, when he was here on Earth, in his parables, in his stories, I mean, I don't have the time to even scratch the surface this morning that he just talks about. I mean, it's a natural flow of his his speech and vocabulary to his disciples.

And they're listening to them that someday I'm going to come back again. I'm going to go. I'm going to come back.

And then he uses all these stories, like in Matthew, Matthew 25, the parable of the virgins, the parable of the talents, the parable of the pounds, the illustration of the two servants, the illustration of the lightning that cometh out of the east and shines into the west. The parable of the fig tree, the parable of the marriage. And it could go on and on and on that he speaks and refers to his second appearing in Acts one, nine and eleven, where those disciples saw the the very ascension of their the Lord Jesus himself.

And they were there on the Mount of Olives, I believe it gives. And they saw him go and they were standing there in amazement. And then the two heavenly messengers came down and stood there by them.

And he says, why do you gaze up there? Why are you watching? I said, oh, you don't understand the purpose of those two heavenly angels coming and standing by the disciples was to convince them and to somehow plant into their minds and their hearts that same Jesus you see going. He's going to come again. Isn't that exciting? They did not come to somehow comfort them and say, hey, yeah, I sympathize with you.

Your savior is leaving you. But they came to tell them and give them words of comfort that he's going to come again. They tell me today, if you go and visit that area, they have a footprint that's preserved.

They think from the ascension of Christ. Well, that would be nice seeing that wouldn't guides can show that to you. Where they think he ascended and they have that boxed off.

And maybe some of you have been there. I've never been there, but that's where he took off the last footprint of Jesus on this earth. But the messengers, that was not the point.

The point was, he's coming again. Paul said, for the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God, Peter. Now, these are words of the apostles.

I just went through and captured a few and put them down. I'm only scratching the surface. Peter says, but the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night and to which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise and the elements shall melt with fervent heat.

The earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. John, the apostle, writes, we know that when he, Christ, shall appear, we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is. Job, man of the Old Testament, said, for I know that my redeemer liveth and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.

Clear back in the Old Testament. I know my redeemer live and there's a day coming. He's going to set his foot on the earth again.

Well, I hope by now, by the word of God, we're all convinced this morning with all the prophecies, all the parables, all the teachings of the apostles that he's coming back again. And I hope and trust there's not a one of you sitting here this morning that is doubting in any way. But I believe it's going to affect our Christian walk very much, how we view this second coming, how keen it is in our mind and our heart.

Well, the disciples, like all of us today, we're so scheduled people, aren't we? We want order. We want organization. My wife is especially that way.

We plan a little trip. She wants to know a week or two weeks or a month or two months ahead how we're going to plan this trip, how many things to take along. And I say that kindly, but we're all that way.

I'm not so much that way, I guess, but we're all that way. Are we not? We want to know what's going on in the future. Well, the disciples were that way.

They came to Jesus one day when he kept talking in his parables and so on this coming, the second coming of Christ. They came to him one day and then he said, tell us, Lord, when shall these things be and what shall be the sign of the coming and the end of the world? So they were curious creatures like we are sort of insecure. Yeah, you're coming back.

But how are we going to know when? Well, all he leaves for them is the signs. He says, you can't really know. I think he said he doesn't even know.

But the God of heaven alone knows when. You know, when you look at history, you see so many men have already prophesied that time in my short life. I remember men coming around and saying it's going to be somewhere just before the year of 2000.

He's got to come back. The way things are going about 1999 and some other years were very popular years for his return. I read clear back in 1844.

There was a man that said he was apparently a very influential man to society. And he came up with this prophecy. He said, you know, the Lord's going to return.

I mean, things were pointing that way in his mind. He's going to return on October the week of October the 20th through the 22nd. Somewhere in those days, he's going to return.

1844, that was. And many people took this prophecy serious. I mean, there were farmers that left their fields and made their crops in the field and just forget about harvest.

I mean, he's coming in October anyway. There were businesses that shut down. And here's a little sign that someone put on on the outside of their little shop outside of their business.

It says this shop is closed in honor of the king of kings who will appear about the 20th of October. Get ready, friend, to crown him lord of all the businesses shut down. Imagine coming to a store and there you have this little sign.

Well, that day came and it went. And here we are. But he's coming.

Signs are still pointing in that direction. He's going to come. But Jesus did not tell us when.

He sort of left us hanging like the disciples. Tell us, when will these things be? Well, we have signs we can go by. Those signs are not altogether clear to us.

But as we look around today, I think they're clearer now than probably ever have been before. Jesus himself says that iniquity shall abound. That is one sign.

That is lawlessness shall abound. Now, is that happening or isn't it? I'll leave that up to you to decide. It says he also says the love of many shall wax cold.

That tells me that people that had a love for Jesus Christ at one time and for spiritual things, maybe they were baptized. They were converted. They were born again.

They were disciples of Christ and they were in love with the things of God. That very love waxed cold and it went away. Is that happening today? Is that happening? That is a sign.

Timothy describes it as departing from the faith. Giving heed to seducing spirits. Deceiving and being deceived.

Is that happening? Apostasy in the church. At one time, things that were called gross sin and ridiculous on the streets of the world are being endorsed in the so-called churches today. Can you imagine the love of many? Apostasy.

It's all around us. These are signs. Some of the signs.

Here's a list of things that Paul gives to Timothy and second Timothy three. This know also in the last days, perilous times shall come for men shall be lovers of their own selves. Covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful.

There's that word unthankful, unholy, despisers of those that are good. Traitors, high minded. Heady lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.

Those are signs of his return. Then he says, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof. And then he gives a hint for us.

Those that are called out to be followers of Christ. He said from such turn away, but he didn't do it until the end. The same shall be saved.

What a positive promise that we have in the midst of all that he says there will be wars and rumors of wars nation against nation and kingdom against kingdom. Is that happening? Those are some of the signs. Peter says it this way.

There shall come in the last days scoffers walking after their own lusts. Is that happening? Making fun of religion, making fun of Christianity, making fun of holy things. They're making fun, walking in their own loss and saying, where is the promise of his coming? Look at that.

I don't hear that a lot yet today. Do you? But I believe the way people live is actually saying that people are not even embarrassed about sin anymore. Open sin and shameful sin and gross sin.

That is saying he's not coming. Everything will just go on like it's ever gone. And he says here that they're going to look back and they're going to say everything's continuing the same as they were when our

fathers fell asleep.

Not much change. The sun still comes up in the east and sets in the west. The weather patterns are still the same.

There's not a lot of change. Why do you think someday this could possibly happen that Christ is going to come in the clouds of great glory and this thing will be over? Well, those were some of the signs and there's many more we could look at. Let's look at the manner of his coming.

How will he come when he finally does decide to come? How is he going to return? The Bible says, behold, he cometh with the clouds. Will it be on a cloudy day? I don't know what that means for sure, but it says he will come with the clouds and we get the idea. Maybe I don't know if scripture really bears this out or where this come from.

Maybe scripture would say that he's going to open the eastern skies. So now today, if you go around to old traditional cemeteries, I guess most of them, as far as I know, they have their cemetery plots turn east and west. And they lay the body there so that when the person rises from the dead, he's facing the east.

And here we go. And ready to come. Ready to meet.

He will come with the clouds and it says that everyone, every eye. It says also those it says every eye shall see him as he comes in the cloud and they also which pierced him and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him, including those who pierced him, including those who pierced his heart by disobedience. Here we see two things, three things happening.

He's going to come with a cloud and it tells us every eye is going to see him. Whether you've been buried facing the south, the north, the west, your eye is still going to see him. Whether you've been that person that said you don't want to face that day and you told your loved ones when you die, you burn my body, cremate it, burn it, put it to ashes and scattered across the ocean.

Those ashes somehow will find their way up out of the water and come together and they have eyes and they will see him. Whether you're blind this morning, maybe you've had an eye accident where your eyes are gone and you can't see today. Your eye somehow is going to see him return in the clouds.

You will be there. Every one of us. And it tells us that all nations will wail.

They will mourn when they see him coming. Now, today, if you're a person sitting here that has a hard heart and you have refused and you have stubbornly rebelled against the voice, that still small voice of God, it tells us that day you will become emotional all of a sudden. You will have feelings and a heart that is soft like flesh and you will mourn and you will wail.

That day your heart will be tenderized. It will be so soft and mushy and emotional that you will. It tells us here those that pierced him, those that had a hard heart, stubbornly rebelled and kicked against the pricks of God all your life.

On that day, that heart will be tender. It will mourn. It says if you choose today, you have a choice.

You ignore Christ. You ignore the word of God. You ignore the spirit of God.

That day you will not have a choice to ignore any longer. He will be there. Your eye and your heart will behold him.

All nations will wail. That's in Revelations. It says he will come with power and great glory in the cloud with power and with great glory.

What a contrast to his first coming. The first coming, he came as a little baby and they had to wrap him in swaddling clothes and they put him in a lonely manger. He was a helpless little baby dependent on man to dress him, to nurture him, to grow him up.

This time he's going to come and he's already clothed with power. He's going to come as a king clothed with power and majesty, king of kings and lord of lords. And he's going to be coming accompanied by all the holy angels.

What a contrast. The lonely little manger for a crib. Now he's accompanied by hosts of heavenly angels.

The next thing I want to look at is the purpose of his coming. The purpose of his coming, Jesus told his disciples, he said, I'm going to go away. I'm going to go and prepare a place for you.

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again. And I will receive you onto myself that where I am there, you may be also. Now, maybe that is referring to the spirit.

When he leaves, he will leave the comforter so that in part we can be with him even while he's gone. But I believe it also means that when he goes away to heaven, he's going to come again. The purpose of his coming is to receive you.

If you're right with him today, I believe his number one purpose of coming is to gather you together. His bride, his people, and to take you with him. Paul says in First Thessalonians 4, 16, 17, for the Lord himself shall ascend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God and the dead in Christ shall rise first.

Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so shall we ever be with the Lord. I believe that is the number one purpose of his return is to gather together his bride on this earth.

And so we shall be together with him in heaven. His purpose of his coming. You know, and he speaks about that a lot in his parables and so on.

He brings in the picture of marriage. And when I think of his return, I think of a marriage. You know, it's the bridegroom that's going to come to gather together his bride.

And there will be that final marriage, that final wedding day. We had quite a number of marriages in our congregation in the recent years. You know, here about a year and a half or so ago, we had a young brother that he was a little older.

I should say an older brother. And he doesn't mind if I share this. I got permission from him.

I used this illustration before already. He was getting a little older in life. I'm not sure if he was 30ish, maybe 30 couple or so.

And I could sense he had a natural desire in him to be married. And here come this young lady along, Elizabeth. His name is Andre Berceau.

Some of you might know him. But he was anticipating this marriage. And here come this young lady along.

And he, of course, not so long of courtship and so on. He asked her to marry her. And, you know, up until that time and even beyond that time and through the wedding and through the whole thing and working with the couple, I have never, I don't think I have ever seen a bridegroom that was so excited about his bride as that guy.

Quite an emotional fellow. He would spill those emotions out. We didn't have him shout at the wedding.

But I'm telling you, if he would have had freedom, I believe there would have been a shout. It was written all over his face when I was there just ready to do the ceremony. Every time I look at him, he just had this big smile on his face.

He knew what was coming in a few minutes here. They were going to join their hands together in marriage. The Bible says Jesus is going to come with a shout.

And I believe he's so excited to marry together his bride to receive them onto himself. You know, Andre and Liz's marriage is going to end at the grave. This marriage says we shall ever be with the Lord.

What a day. What a day. No wonder Jesus is going to come with a shout in the clouds and the angels will be shouting with him.

The trump of God shall blow. It will be a noisy time. It will be a noisy time.

The Bible bears that out. Another place it says, I believe Paul's words, he says, when he shall come to be glorified and to be admired. Dual purpose of coming.

To be admired. You know, men really desire to be admired by their wives. God has that in him.

Jesus has that in him. And he's so worthy. I just appreciate when my wife admires me.

Jesus is going to come back. To be admired face to face. By his bride.

Let's look at another purpose of his coming. He is coming to judge the world. The Bible is very clear on that.

Another purpose to come. For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, as I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me and every tongue shall confess to God.

So then every one of us shall give an account of himself to God. Romans 14, 10 and 12. There it is.

He's going to come back to judge. And we can rest assured this morning that this judgment is going to be a right one. It's going to be just and it's going to be true.

And Jesus brings that out. He says, for as the father had the life in himself, so had he given to his son to have life in himself. And had given him authority to execute judgment also because he is the son of man.

Marvel not at this. For the hour is coming and the which all that are in the grave shall hear his voice and shall come forth. They have they that have done good unto the resurrection of life and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.

So this tells me that, as I mentioned earlier, we will all be there on that day when he comes back on that great and notable day, the day of the Lord, the judgment day. We will all be there. There are no exemption forms for this one.

None of us can get out of this, whether we want to or not. We will be there to give an account for every word. Every idle word that comes proceeds out of our hearts and our mouth to give an account for that.

Did you know there's a little book being recorded from your life today? And that day you will stand there before God, the creator of the universe, and you will give an account for the things you have said and not made right. Now, if you repent it and you've given all your sin and all your gossip or whatever it might be to Christ. He can take that away and erase it as if you've never done it.

But if you're an unrepentant person here, you have words that just bubble out of your mouth, whether they're unkind and rough and gruff, disrespectful and all of that. Those words are being recorded today and you will stand before this almighty God and you will give an account for that. That is very clear.

And you know what this should do for us. If we're have any kind of responsibility and outreach or maybe you have prison ministers here or not. We have some of that, several of them back at Shippensburg, Chambersburg area, children's ministries and so on.

Every person we minister to or counsel, we need to remember that person will be there that day as well. Your grandparents will be there. Your grandchildren will be there.

Everyone, let's just penetrate that into our heart and mind. There's no one that's going to be exempt on that day. Jesus describes this judgment day as a great day of separation.

When we look at Matthew 25, why don't we just flip our Bibles over to Matthew chapter 25? I'll just read a few verses. It's a familiar story there of the end time judgment. Matthew 25, verse 31, when the son of man shall come in his glory and all the holy angels with him.

Then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory and before him shall be gathered all nations. And he shall separate them one from another as a shepherd divided his sheep from the goats. See that separation, a day of separation.

Now, we know in part what it means to separate today. Two weeks ago or so, we took my wife's sister and her husband, her family to the airport to fly to California to do mission work for two years. A two year commitment.

As we stood there at the airport just before they went into the takeoff or through their examination and so on, we stood in a circle there for a little while and we prayed together. And I look around and I see tears flowing out of probably every eye that was there. This was a separation for two years.

We're going to say goodbye tomorrow. We have a funeral. My wife's uncle passed away.

There's going to be tears shed at that funeral, tears of mourning and of separation, most of all. But you know, there will. We have never experienced a separation like this separation will be.

When Jesus himself will sit on the throne and he takes all nations there on that great day of judgment, he's going to separate as a shepherd divided his sheep from the goats. There will be a right side and a left side. And this will be the final separation.

There will be sheep that are going to be with him forevermore. And then there will be goats on the left that will go to everlasting damnation. There will be, I believe, a lot of tears shed that day as well.

But that day is coming. That day is coming. A great separation.

And if you read the story of this. They have a promise that is given a destiny that is spelled out for them. He says to them on the right side.

Then shall the king say unto them on the right hand, come, you blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Can you imagine the delight? Can you imagine the comfort and the peace and the rest that would go with hearing those words? Come. What a warm invitation to come with Jesus.

What a warm invitation. You appreciate invitations today to be at someone's house for a meal, to go to a wedding. Do you appreciate invitations today? This will be one of its kind.

You jump down to verse 41. He says, then shall he say unto them on the left hand, depart from me. You cursed.

Into everlasting fire. Prepared for the devil and his angels. Brothers and sisters, these are not my words this morning.

These are the words of Jesus Christ. This day is coming. If you read that story, makes it very clear.

Those that were on the right responded to Christ's commandments. When we look at back, we talked about Abraham and Noah going against the flow. And I believe they desperately were going against the flow.

We talked a little bit about the ridicule that Abraham or Noah must have suffered. Think of the ridicule Abraham must have suffered. When he was promised that son, he's going to be a father of a great nation.

And it didn't make sense. It just didn't make sense. But the Bible tells us.

He believed the words of God. And he had hope against hope, against all odds. It just did not make sense.

And I can imagine, invite you to imagine with me, the people that he would meet. His neighbors, his buddies, his relatives maybe. And he would say, here's that guy that's a hundred years old and he's still expecting a child.

You can imagine the mockery and just the ridicule and the being made fun of. Abraham, is it born yet? Is it a son or is it a daughter? Imagine what he may have been facing. But as we remember, he did not stagger at the promises of God.

And he was fully persuaded that what God had promised, he was also able to perform. So he put this over on God's lap. It's God's problem.

Whether it makes sense or not, it's God's problem. And I think of the commandments of Jesus Christ today. We see that in the list of Matthew chapter 25.

This didn't make sense to the human mind, does it? The commandments of Christ when he says, when somebody punches you in the one cheek. Human nature would tell us, give him one back. But Jesus says, turn to him the other also.

When someone takes advantage of you, they take something or they curse you. Human nature would tell them, would say, curse back, hit them back, get them back, get even to them. There's a nature within us that rises.

But Jesus says, instead, get down on your knees and bless them, pray for them. When somebody takes something from you. And here, there was a list in Matthew 25 that were so totally going against nature.

They were blessing those around them. And as God said to Abraham, it was accounted unto him for righteousness. And there's a lot of things today that Jesus speaks to us in the Sermon on the Mount.

Store not up for yourselves treasures on earth. When we live in a society that says otherwise. Come on, you're irresponsible if you don't have a good insurance policy.

Or if you don't work hard and somehow store up for that rainy day. Or you work hard for that retirement. You're foolish, you're being irresponsible.

Jesus says, take no thought. Store not up for yourselves treasures on this earth. That doesn't make sense.

Because we're going to get old someday, aren't we? And we can't work on that day. Who's going to care for us? It doesn't make sense, does it? But Jesus said, I take care of the birds and the flowers. And I'm going to take care of you.

It's the words of Jesus. Therefore, we believe it. Even if it doesn't make sense.

Just like Abraham. It was accounted unto him. It was imputed unto him for righteousness.

That's the life of faith. It does matter how we live. Don't let anyone tell you different.

We live in a time where there's false doctrine and teaching about free will. Free choice. I read from a very, written by a very popular Bible preacher.

I'll just write what he says about that. He illustrates two persons brought up in the same environment. One became a Christian and the other didn't.

Here's what he says. It is not because the one made a better choice than the other. It is because God gave more grace to the one than the other.

Is that true? That is false. That is a false teaching. What he's saying by that.

There's nothing you can do to earn your salvation. While that is true. You cannot earn your salvation this morning.

But I'm guaranteeing you this morning. If you choose to follow Satan and his world and his kingdom. You'll be lost.

The Bible teaches that very clearly. And there is this business of pouring out grace more to one than the other. I don't serve a God like that.

I serve a God that is just and that is good and filled with mercy and grace. And there is not a one person sitting here this morning in this life. That has not.

That has experienced. Maybe I'll talk about that a little bit later. I just had to put that in because there's very much in our circles.

A confused idea about who God is. And to me, it paints a picture of this dishonest, unjust God that only pours out mercy. Whom he chooses to propose.

And the other one is just tough. I ask a man one day that had a large family. A number of children that was under this belief.

He said, I know my oldest child is a child of God. But he said, for the rest, I don't know. I said, well, what are you going to tell them once they're older to understand the ways of God to become a Christian? He said, it's just it's just I can do nothing about it.

It's all up to God whether or not he chooses. This one will be in. This one will be out.

This one will be in. This one will be out. Nothing in their part.

I said, you can't offer to them that great peace that you've experienced with God to your children. This is what you do. Do you repent, confess your sin, become a child of God? No.

He said, that's all up to God. God does the choosing. He does call us.

But Matthew 25 makes it very clear that here were people that were choosing right. They were following after the teachings of Jesus Christ and they putting their faith into action. And it was accounted unto them for righteousness.

The third thing you will come for is to bring vengeance. Now, first, ultimately, I think the purpose of his coming is to, as we mentioned, marry together to bring his bride. And then he comes to judge the world.

Second purpose, I mentioned. And however, these things are in order. But another thing we can't overlook, he will also come to bring vengeance on the disobedient.

Those that have chosen not to obey, not to follow him. The Bible is very clear, just as clear as it is that he will come to marry. He will also come to pour out vengeance and the wrath of God upon the disobedient.

The Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels. Remember, we said he will come in a cloud. Here it tells us that he will come in a flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and obey.

Action word, obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power. On that separation day, he will not only come for the bride, but he will also come to pour out the wrath of God upon disobedience.

And all of God's grace will be taken away from those on the left. Revelations tells us they shall drink, says they shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture in the cup of his indignation. And they shall be tormented with fire and brimstone and the smoke of their torment ascended up forever and ever.

And they have no rest day nor night. Now, that pouring out the wrath of God without mixture gives a picture of wine at full strength. And I take that meaning all grace is going to be removed from God's wrath on that day.

What I was going to say earlier, there is not a soul sitting here this morning that has not in some way or the other, whether you're a Christian or not, put it that way. There's not a person out here on the streets of Ephrata today that has not in some way or another experienced the grace and mercy of God upon their life. Every breath they take, every time they cut their hand and pinch it in the door of the car or whatever, and all that pain, and it becomes better and better and better and healing.

That is mercy and grace that is poured out upon men. And there's no one that has experienced in this life without mixture. But on that day, all of that mercy, all of that grace, all of that comfort will be totally taken away.

And there's no more God. There is no more God. There is no more comfort.

There's no more hope for ever getting right, for ever repenting, for ever making amends or making restitution or for healing or comfort or for drying of tears. None of that. It will be forever away from the presence of God.

That is the wrath of God that is poured out upon those that are disobedient to him without mixture. No, no, the wine will not be diluted with a little bit of water, with a little bit of comfort or a little bit of grace and mercy. No, it's going to be the full strength of God's wrath upon his people, Satan's people.

How should the thought of the return of Christ affect our life? Jesus repeated so many warnings in his teachings. Be prepared for his return. So many warnings.

But the end of all things is at hand. Peter says Peter set first Peter four, seven, nine. The end of all things is at hand.

Be you therefore sober and watch on to prayer and above all things have fervent charity among yourselves. Use hospitality one to another without grudging. So there's three things that Peter mentions when you see this day approaching, when things are nearing toward the end.

What should it do to you? Therefore, he says, be sober, be a serious minded bunch of people. Sober, watch on to prayer. Put your spare time and your energy into prayer.

He says above all these things, even above prayer, even above being sober, he says have fervent charity, love that is hot and available and responsive. Like those in Matthew chapter 25. Hospitality.

That's what it's all about, isn't it? Loving those around you. Loving your neighbor. Loving the church people.

Hospitality. Exercising that. Bring them into your home.

Take a meal over to your neighbor. Because he's coming soon. This should motivate you to love, to good works, to hospitality and all of that.

Second Peter 3.11 says, seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation? In all holy conversation or conduct and godliness? It should stir your hearts when you see that day approaching. It should stir your hearts to be holy, to be godly. I remember when I was a child at home, I wasn't very old at the time.

There was an old man that came around, a gray haired man. And I took him as a prophet from God. He came to my father and to my family there and he told us that he believed that Christ was going to come very soon.

And you know, in a little child's mind, very soon could mean tomorrow or the next day, maybe this week. When maybe he was thinking ten years or fifty years or twenty years. I don't know what he was thinking where he said very soon.

But I took it to mean that he's coming either tomorrow or the next day. I mean, very soon. I took this thing so seriously.

So did my siblings. There was a number of us in the family, those of us that were the same age and still young. And we took this thing to heart.

You know what kind of persons we were the next week. I mean, we were so lovely and kind to each other. No more fighting.

No way. I remember we were working out in the field and normally we'd sort of push the heavy load on the other person and do our little thing like probably most children do. Not those two next days.

I mean, we would carry the heavy load. We would always do those nice, sweet, kind little things for the other because in my mind, he's coming back tomorrow or the next day. And I don't want to stand before him with all this unkind stuff in my history.

I want it to be right with him. And that's the picture we get here. When we see the time is coming close, it should really motivate us to be kind and loving and filled with hospitality and all those good Christian virtues.

And it should affect our ministry. Now, if you look throughout the Bible, almost without exception, when the coming of Christ is mentioned either from by the apostles or Christ himself, almost without exception, it is followed by an exhortation to godliness and holy living. Almost without exception, when he talks about the coming of Christ, his second return, he says, therefore, watch, therefore, be this.

So it should really affect the way we live, the way we think, the way we respond to our neighbors, our brothers and sisters. It's very obvious that both Christ and the apostles use the warnings of the return of Christ to point or to appeal, to make a point and to point people to obedience and holiness. Paul himself said, knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.

Have you ever had a high pressure salesman at your house? I have. We've had one there that lasted for four hours. He was trying to sell me windows for my house.

I needed windows, but his windows were almost too. I couldn't afford to put it that way. And I tried almost every way I could to get him off of my back.

And he tried every angle he could use to persuade me that I need his windows. Paul says, knowing the terror or the judgment or the separation or whatever you want to mention. He says, we persuade men.

So if you go out here and you witness and you preach and you teach and talk to people about their life and they're of such a mind frame that they just sort of roll it off and shrug it off. Paul says, we use this method. He says we we persuade them.

We use the judgment, the second return, any method we can to somehow persuade in that person's heart and hard mind that someday soon Christ is going to come back. You're going to stand before him. He's going to be your judge.

You're going to give an account of your life to him. Let's use that method in our ministry. If we have a person that is just going through life, hard hearted, rebellious and just shrugging off all the serious things about life.

I know our brother land that passed away. He once said, when you study the Bible, he says you see many more warnings about the punishment of the evildoer. Then you see blessings and rewards of the one that is right with God.

And I believe that's true. I didn't do the research myself necessarily, but there's a lot of warnings and the Bible and the scripture about that terrible day that is coming, that is going to be dividing of good from bad. The last thing I want to talk about is.

When we think of how it should affect our life, when we think of the return of Christ. This is for the believer, the one that is right with God and has peace and made his peace with man and with God. And all is well with your soul this morning.

How will the thought of his return affect your life? It will bring hope to you. It will cause you to with great anticipation. Watch as I read earlier there to watch unto prayer.

A number of passages in scripture talk about watching because he's going to come as a thief in the night, especially to those that are not ready for him. But we are called to watch for him. I read a story of a group of sailors that took a long journey away from their wives.

The men, husbands, they were took a long journey away from their wives. And then when they returned back to closer to shore at a distance, they got their binoculars out to see if they could see their perhaps see their wife waiting on shore for them. And all the group, all the men could pick out their wife there.

The wife knew they were coming at a certain time. And all the wives were standing in there waiting and watching for their husband's return. But there was one wife that was missing and the husband out there was disappointed.

He said, I don't see my wife. And then when he came home, he talked to his wife about this. Why weren't you out there? I couldn't spot you with my binoculars.

And she said, well, I was waiting for you. But he said, you weren't watching. Maybe you're waiting today.

Maybe you're not watching. Maybe you don't have that anticipation within you. It's not a fearful kind of watching thing, but it's a watching of anticipation as the bride of Christ.

The excitement that Jesus will have when he comes in and have that great shout with him. Do you have the hope of anticipation, anticipating his return as the bride? The rent of this little children's home. This just really touched my heart.

And I was never at one of these kinds of children's homes. But I hear there's some around in Mexico and so on where the children come from bad situations. And they're put in a home orphanage that is filled with dirt and filth and trouble.

Disappointment. And they already came from a home life that was that way. And they had in this home a number of these children that came from very unfortunate situations.

Well, the method that these counselors and instructors and so on used to bring comfort to these children. They told these children that there's a day coming. That all will be well.

They talked about the second coming of Christ and how that he's going to return out of the cloud as we talked about from the eastern sky. Those children took this, they ate this thing up and it became so precious to them. The counselors explained to them there will be no more hate.

There will be no more pain, no more disappointment. No more of all the troubles that they have experienced in their past. And they said that children's home had a long window along the east of the building.

I don't know, I'm a little confused. Is this the east out here? I'm not sure. But let's just say this was all glass window here.

And those that cleaned windows said they had a hard time keeping this area clean. Because the children were up against here with their noses and their facing watching the eastern skies. Great anticipation.

They were waiting for the return of their Savior to go with him where there will be no more tears. No more crying. No more brokenness.

No more separation. And they were just keeping the window all sticky and dirty with their great love and anticipation for their Savior. Now let's look at just in closing here, I'd like for you to just flip your Bible over to Hebrews chapter 11.

Let's see how Abraham was affected by this in his life. Verse 10 and 11, I'll just read it. Chapter 11, verse 10 and 11.

For he looked for a city which hath foundation, whose builder and maker is God. I skipped a verse. I was going to start in verse 9. By faith he sojourned, talking about Abraham, in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise.

Now Abraham was given the land of promise. This was the land that flowed with milk and honey. I think Abraham could have become a wealthy man there.

I believe he could have lived in a mansion. See what he did instead? He chose to live in a tent. Why? Because he was motivated and he was excited about that eastern sky opening up like those children.

Because, he said, there's a city there. Beyond those clouds, there's a city whose builder and maker is God. There will be no more tears.

There will be no more sorrow. If the tears come, Jesus will be there to wipe them dry. That is the comfort I want to leave with you.

The Bible says we are to comfort one another with these thoughts. So we shall ever be with the Lord. Amen.

I have a question that came across the conversation with a couple of men the other night. In John chapter 20, the Bible says that going into the tomb, which is now empty, when Jesus resurrected, it says in verse 7, chapter 20 of the book of John, And the napkin that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothed, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Why did Jesus, when he resurrected, stop and fold the napkin and lay it on the bed before he exited the tomb and had his triumphant resurrection? Any thoughts? I had never looked at that before, myself either.

And one of the brethren said that he understood that it was a custom, I assume a Jewish custom, that if you did that, you would come back. That it was a sign that if you did that in a home or a restaurant or wherever, that you would fold your napkin and lay it nicely down again, that it meant that you wanted to come back again. Or that you would come back again.

So I thought that was very, very interesting as a simple gesture there that the Lord Jesus, before he had all of that of the triumphant resurrection, that he stopped and left a sign there, I'm coming back. And we hold to that through the multitude of scripture and promise to this day. Jesus Christ is coming back.

And we believe that to be soon. We expect it in the lifetime of many that are in this room, according to the signs of the times that we see. And therefore, we need to, as our brother admonished us, think soberly to keep our lives in the love of Christ.

Keep our lives pure, unspotted before him that we may not be ashamed at his coming. Amen. God help us to live that way as a group, as a body here today.

Alright, any other thoughts or comments, questions anyone has? Raise your hand. We'll give you a microphone and give you an opportunity to share with us up here in the front. Yes, I just wanted to say I so appreciated the message this morning.

I remember years ago when I was not born again. I remember when I would hear a message on the second coming of Christ, how it scared me. How it was not a thought of comfort.

And just hearing it today just calls to rejoicing in my heart. It's a wonderful thought that the Lord Jesus one day is going to come back for his own. And I just wanted to praise the Lord this morning that he is coming back and I believe it.

Amen. It's a big difference when there's peace in the heart. Someone else over here.

Dave Esch. Yeah, I do want to say that I appreciated all the messages this morning. They were encouraging and convicting.

I appreciated especially the point that there's no way that we can earn our salvation. We are not saved by our works. We are saved by grace.

But that in no way eliminates our choices. And I just appreciated that point. Amen.

Brother Dean. I appreciate Harvey's thought there on when as a child he had that thought that Christ was going to come the next day or so. And that has, this scripture here in 1 John 3 has always been one of my favorite scriptures on the second coming of Christ.

It says in 1 John 3, 2 and 3, Beloved, now are we the sons of God. We know that much. And it does not yet appear what we shall be.

But we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is. And every man that has this hope in him purifies himself even as he, Jesus, is pure. Amen.

And I think that if we have that hope in our hearts, it will keep us from growing cold and complacent and the cares of life overtaking us. And that's, I think, why the admonishment to comfort one another with these words. Because this is tremendous motivation and a right motivation to live a holy life, pure life.

Yeah, I had to think of the same verse. And if it could do that for him and his siblings there, it can do it for us. He that hath this hope in him purifies himself even as he is pure.

Amen.

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